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Granger, Amos Phelps, N.Y.  
Kansas - The Leecompton constitution  
Speech.



Class F. 2

Book 3





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KANSAS—THE LECOMPTON CONSTITUTION.

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SPEECH

OF

HON. AMOS P. GRANGER,

OF NEW YORK,

IN THE

U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

MARCH 24, 1858.

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## SPEECH OF MR. GRANGER.

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Mr. CHAIRMAN: Passing by the all-disturbing subject of Slavery, for the present, I arrive at objections to the passage of this Lecompton Constitution, that, with any candid mind, ought to outweigh every consideration that can be offered in its favor.

First. That the people of Kansas have, by the Kansas-Nebraska act, a clear and undoubted right, and they alone, to form their Constitution as they, in their judgment, may think best.

This, I conclude, no one will deny, and therefore I deem it not debatable.

Secondly. That the people of Kansas are, by a very decided majority, opposed to that Constitution, and have so declared at a full and fair election—an election held pursuant to an act of the Territorial Legislature, assembled by order of a Governor who was appointed by the President; and that the said election was the only one ever held in the Territory of Kansas to decide for or against that Constitution.

Sir, is not this also true? I believe it is, and I trust no member on this floor will attempt to controvert it. Thus far, then, we agree.

If I am not mistaken in these two facts, to wit: that the people of Kansas have the right to decide on their own Constitution, and that they have fairly and solemnly passed upon this Lecompton Constitution, and rejected it; I ask, then, is there a member

present who will vote to compel the people of Kansas to accept that Constitution, and forego the exercise of the great fundamental right of self-government—a right on which our whole republican edifice is erected?

If, then, these two facts are true—and I do not expect to see the first member who will call in question the truth of either—I say to the Democrats, Americans, and Republicans, are not these objections paramount and conclusive against the passage of this Lecompton Constitution?

Here I might rest and submit the cause, and, with a fair and candid trial on its merits, with full confidence await the issue.

Sir, it would be a curiosity to see a Northern Representative vote direct to make a slave State north of 36 degrees 30 minutes, and particularly one professing to be a Democratic Representative from the State of New York.

The members from that State must know—and you do know—first, that a vast majority of your constituents, of all parties, loathe and detest that nefarious swindle called the Lecompton Constitution; and that there is not one Congressional district of the thirty-four, where a majority of the voters are in favor of its passage.

And secondly, you also know that if that Constitution is forced on Kansas at the *dictum* of the Executive, by an arbitrary vote of Congress, it is done against the will of an overwhelming majority of the people of Kansas.

Here I desire to present for the inspection and review of Northern members, and their constituents in particular, one leading principle of the Lecompton Constitution, which is in the words following, to wit:

#### ART. 7.—SLAVERY.

“SEC. 1. The right of property is before and higher than any constitutional sanction, and the right of the owner of a slave to such slave, and its increase, is



‘ the same and as inviolable as the right of the owner  
 ‘ of any property whatever.’”

Now, then, to pass the Lecompton Constitution, and make it the Constitution for the State of Kansas, by the aid of Democratic votes from the State of New York, with New York and Kansas both opposed, would be interesting entirely. If what I have said be true, I have said enough already to bar the door against it.

If the people of the State of New York, with great unanimity, desire their Representatives to vote against it, and if at the same time their Representatives know that the people of Kansas with singular unanimity reject it, and will not accept it, and that their Legislature by a unanimous vote protest against it, and officially declare they never will submit to it on any terms whatever, in all conscience, I ask, is not that enough—I say, is not that enough to warrant, nay, command, its rejection by every vote from the Empire State?

But more than that; you know that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was a scandalous violation of plighted faith, dishonest and dishonorable in its character, a costly sacrifice of Southern honor, and the most dangerous move that Slavery ever made. *It was aggressive. It was agitation of the worst sort.* It was an unexpected declaration of war—Slavery against Freedom, and Slavery the invader; and it may prove to be a war of extermination.

Sir, it was done to steal the march and crowd Slavery where it had never been before, and where it was not welcome. It absolves all Northern men from delicacy towards the so-called institution of Slavery, and leaves them free to speak of it and treat it as it deserves—a loathsome, lawless invader of the rights of man, in direct violation of the Declaration of American Independence, at variance with the Articles of Confederation, and openly at war with the Constitution of the United States, the President to the contrary notwithstanding.

That Southern men, brought up from infancy to prize and respect it, and educated from generation to generation to think it right and lawful, that they be prejudiced in its favor is not a mystery.

The same relations and circumstances might produce the same results in us.

For them to seek to extend Slavery is not so strange ; but for Northern members, brought up at Gamaliel's feet, inhaling from early life the healthful sentiments of Northern freemen, and taught to believe Slavery unlawful and wrong—that such a member should be found to part with the approbation of his constituents, if not of his conscience, and, in the time of trial, to desert the cause of Freedom, his country, and his friends, and he himself the unlucky instrument by which the blight of chattel slavery shall curse the soil and blast the future of a young, rising empire, is painful to anticipate.

You do know that when Kansas came to elect her first Legislature, to make her first laws, a band of ruffians near five thousand strong, armed to the teeth, came from Missouri, took the polls by storm, and drove the honest voters away ; elected their Legislature, many of whom lived then and now in Missouri, and returned back in triumph ; and all to make Kansas a slave State.

You do know that for objecting to this outrage, a Democratic Governor of Kansas (Reeder) was removed by the President, and lost caste with the friends of Slavery.

Why, there have been about as many Democratic Governors of Kansas as there were “sons of one Skeva, a Jew,” unceremoniously removed from office and turned adrift, one after another, because they refused to go all lengths to crush out Freedom and drive out freemen, to make Kansas a slave State.

You do know that the Free State men of Kansas were persecuted and hunted and robbed and murdered, and that an alien ruffian Legislature would give

them no protection ; and all to extirpate free principles and free men ; and that it was an offence against the tyrannic laws of that Legislature to even *say* that man cannot hold property in man. An offence, nay, a felony, punishable with the State's prison.

*Is that liberty of speech?*—not allowed so much as to speak against Slavery—and that a law the President sent his troops to execute!

Is that not despotism? For far less than that, our fathers declared *King George* “*unfit to be the ruler of a free people.*”

They took up arms to defend their rights.

He sent Gage to Boston with three thousand men to overawe the people.

And we have twenty-five hundred sent to Kansas on exactly the same errand.

You know the city of Lawrence was burned at noonday by border-ruffian officers, while United States troops were near at hand, anxious for orders (which they never got) to interfere and save the town.

Lawrence was the quiet home of Free State men.

You know that the Government of Kansas was a foul usurpation, countenanced by the President of the United States, and upheld by his troops, with a design to make Kansas a slave State.

You know that cruel and corrupt judges have been kept in office there, “to clear the guilty and varnish crimes,” and all to advance the cause of Slavery, and make Kansas a slave State.

You know that the worst of border ruffians have enjoyed the smiles and patronage of Federal favor in the Territory of Kansas, with a design to make Kansas a slave State.

You know that at subsequent elections the vilest frauds have been acted over and over again, to prevent a fair election, and to make Kansas a slave State.

You know the Lecompton Constitution is to be put through, if possible, by Executive power and patronage, covered all over as it is with fraud, and spotted

with corruption, and thus rivet on Kansas the detested curse of chattel slavery, and that against the faithful, persevering, manly opposition of her people, as expressed at a fair and legal election, by a majority of more than five to one.

Will you, Representatives of the free and free-labor-loving North, *will you* endorse this catalogue of cruelty and crimes, and give your votes for the notorious Lecompton Constitution, and place your names on everlasting record as the *aiders* and *abettors* of an *Executive* who *perverts* and *falsifies* the Constitution, and *daily* and *deliberately* connives at all the matchless border-ruffian villainies of Kansas, with a single eye to compel Kansas to *submit* to a Constitution *not* her own, and become a slave State against her will?

And now, to cap the climax of absurdity and wrong, you are to be disciplined, and, if possible, reduced, and seduced to do an act that you could never justify, the memory of which would haunt you while you live.

Let it be known in all the North, *nay*, through all the land, South and North, that not one Republican member was found to falter, not one was doubtful or missing, that every one was at his post, by night or day, and stood by his integrity to the last.

If a President with his *Haynaus* can be upheld in this attempt to stifle liberty in Kansas, I trust it will be done, if done it must be, by Democratic votes, and none other.

Sir, if to fill the contract and make the tally, the President can find cringing doughfaces from the North, though they hail from Democratic ranks, may the *Empire* State be spared the sacrifice.







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